

## New Jersey event discusses role of Chinese in the Cuban Revolution

BY ANGEL LARISCY

PISCATAWAY, New Jersey—"As a history professor I read *Our History Is Still Being Written* with great interest," said Matt Matsuda, dean of the College Avenue campus at Rutgers University. "But when I was asked to organize a meeting on this book I wondered who else would find this interesting.

"Well, the answer is those of you here tonight," he said, reading off the names of the 12 organizations and departments sponsoring an April 8 event at the Asian American Cultural Center at Rutgers University in New Brunswick. More than 85 people attended, two-thirds of them students at the college.

Published by Pathfinder Press, *Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution* is based on interviews with Armando Choy, Gustavo Chui, and Moisés Sío Wong. They joined the revolutionary struggle in Cuba as teenagers in the 1950s, were part of the 1958–59 revolution, and are active leaders of the

Continued on page 6

## Socialist campaigns for labor party at Iowa campus

BY JOE SWANSON

MARSHALLTOWN, Iowa—Students at Marshalltown Community College, some of whom also work at the local Swift meatpacking plant and others who work on family farms, heard Róger Calero, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president, speak April 9.

Larry Ginter, a retired farmer from Marshall County, where the college is located, introduced Calero at the meeting. After Calero made a presentation, a student asked, "There are millions of people supporting the Democrats and Republicans. How do you get support?"

Calero explained, "We get the best hearing from those who fight back against a boss, against cop brutality, or those who oppose the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq."

In all of these fights, he continued, workers are hampered as long as the labor movement remains tied to the two-party capitalist system of the Democrats and Republicans. "Above all, working people need our own political party, a labor party based on fighting unions," he explained. "A labor party will mobilize workers and

Continued on page 4

## Strikes, demonstrations demand relief from inflation, food prices

BY DOUG NELSON

Rising prices of food and other basic necessities have pushed down working people's standard of living in much of the world. In a number of countries, workers have responded with strikes and other actions.

The general rate of inflation has grown over the last year worldwide. But prices for food and fuel have risen at a particularly fast pace. Global food prices have risen 83 percent over the last three years, according to the World Bank estimates. Prices of basic staples such as corn, rice, and wheat have shot up by more than double within a one year span.

In Haiti, protests spread across the country in early April against high prices and the UN occupation force there. (See article on page 3).

At least 10,000 workers demonstrated April 5 in Ljubljana, Slovenia, to demand higher wages to deal with rising prices faced by more than 30 million workers across Europe. The demonstration, organized by the European Trade Union Confederation, took place as European central bankers met there to discuss inflation and other economic problems. Their solution: freeze workers' wages to keep down labor costs.

"We only want higher wages, the inflation we can't stop," said Elmer Zu-

bovic, a worker from Ljubljana at the protest.

Days earlier German public-sector workers wrested a nearly 8 percent wage increase. In March, 93,000 steelworkers in Germany won a 5.2 percent raise; train drivers got an 8 percent increase

Continued on page 3

## May Day week campaign can boost sub drive

BY OLYMPIA NEWTON

The *Militant*'s eight-week campaign to win 2,400 new readers is behind schedule in its third week. Supporters of the paper around the world have signed up 780 new readers so far. This is more than 100 short of where we need to be.

The subscription campaign will get a much-needed boost as supporters of the paper across the United States organize with their coworkers to take off work and march for the rights of immigrants on May Day.

As an added bonus, the brand-new

Continued on page 4

## Anti-deportation fight will mark May 1 in L.A.

Judge imposes curfew on Van Nuys workers

BY MICHAEL ORTEGA

LOS ANGELES—An immigration judge here has ordered workers arrested in a recent immigration raid confined to their homes after 7 p.m. The workers have been playing an active role in building public protests for legalization of undocumented immigrants and against raids and deportations.

"Organizing has gotten harder since the immigration judge passed an order

### May Day actions around the country — Page 9

this Friday that those of us with ankle bracelets cannot leave the house after 7 p.m. or before 7 a.m.," said Ulises, *Continued on page 9*

### Seattle campuses build toward May Day



Militant/Chris Hoepner

SEATTLE—Students at Seattle University protest April 8 against a Border Patrol cop recruiting session organized there by the Department of Homeland Security. The protest was called by student groups including NoSir and the Chicano Student Movement of Aztlan (MEChA).

The following weekend, some 150 workers and students attended the Workers' Assembly on Immigration at the Evergreen College campus in Tacoma, Washington. It was called by the campus Labor Center and El Comité Pro Reforma Migratoria y Justicia Social, one of the immigrant rights group organizing the May Day march in Seattle. Two busloads of day laborers attended from El Centro, a social service and cultural facility in Seattle.

One of the speakers was Antonio Flores, who helped organize protests against police profiling of immigrant workers during traffic stops in the town of Pacific near Seattle.

"We stood up and marched in Pacific even though we knew we might be arrested," he said. "We have a right to be here to work."

—MARY MARTIN

## 'Militant' needs steady stream of contributions

BY CINDY JAQUITH

As the third week in the *Militant*'s spring fund drive closes, the gap has widened between where we should be and where we are. We've collected \$24,205, but we should be at \$37,500.

As we head into May Day, our expenses will go up. We will publish the paper a day earlier, on Wednesday,

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### Also Inside:

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Detroit auto workers solid in strike over wages 7

# Kurds protest discrimination in Turkey

BY VED DOOKHUN

After ending its eight-day invasion in February of Iraqi Kurdistan, the Turkish government has continued military operations directed at Kurds in Turkey. Kurds, which comprise up to 20 percent of Turkey's population, have responded with protests demanding national rights.

The Turkish military announced April 10 that its troops killed 13 Kurdish rebels in the eastern provinces of Tunceli and Diyarbakir. A force of 200,000 Turkish troops are carrying out military operations aimed at the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), an armed Maoist group, in southeastern Turkey.

Turkey's invasion of northern Iraq was sanctioned and supported by Washington. Both the U.S. and Turkish rulers fear that growing confidence among Kurds who have gained a real measure of autonomy in Iraq could lead to renewed struggles in the Kurdish regions of neighboring Turkey, Iran, and Syria.

Kurds in Turkey organized mass celebrations of Nowruz, their new year celebration, which began on March 21 this year. In Istanbul 300,000 took to the streets March 23 in a display of Kurdish national pride.

Thousands waved the traditional green, yellow, and red colors of the Kurdish flag. Some chanted slogans in support of the PKK and carried photos of its jailed leader, Abdullah Ocalan.

The Turkish police responded by trying to crack down on the celebrations, prompting angry demonstrations. For five days police clashed with Kurds in a number of Kurdish towns and cities. In two towns, demonstrators were killed by police.

In the Syrian town of Qamishli, near the Turkish border, about 200 people gathered March 20 on a road in the town, lighting candles, making a bonfire, and performing traditional Kurdish dances, witnesses told the Associated Press. A half-hour later, Syrian internal security forces opened fire on the crowd, killing three men.

Fearing protests, the Syrian government sent 10,000 troops into the Kurdish region, the *Jerusalem Post* reported.

## Oppressed nationality

The Kurdish people are an oppressed nation of 20 to 25 million with their own language and culture.

Following the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in World War I a Kurdish state was agreed to by the Allied powers codified in the 1920 Treaty of Sevres. However, the treaty was never ratified. Three years later it was replaced by the Treaty of Lausanne, which denied the Kurds an independent state and divided their lands between Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria.

About half of the Kurds live in Turkey. Despite their size as a national group Kurds are not recognized as a minority and face political and cultural persecution. Historically the Kurds in Syria, Iran, and Iraq have faced similar oppression.

Until 1991 it was illegal to speak Kurdish in Turkey even in informal settings. The language is still illegal in public schools and official settings. In 2004 Ankara began broadcasting on state television and radio the first Kurdish-language shows—for 30 minutes a week. There are no private Kurdish TV or radio networks.

The second-class citizenship of

Kurds in Turkey is further underlined by health and literacy statistics. In the rural eastern area of the country, 43 percent of Kurdish males and 68 percent of Kurdish females have no education. In the rural population as a whole, the figure is 18 percent and 37 percent. Infant mortality among Kurds is 74 deaths per thousand live births, compared to 46 among Turks.

Political parties that are sympathetic to the Kurds have been shut down under a law which forbids recognition of religious or racial minorities. In the 1990s eight parties were shut down for being "separatist."

Leya Zena, then a leader of the People's Labor Party (HEP) and the first woman elected to parliament, wore Kurdish colors in her hair and spoke in Kurdish at the swearing-in ceremony in 1991 as a form of protest.

After losing her immunity as a member of parliament, Zena was tried and jailed for treason in 1994 and the Democratic Party, the successor to the HEP, was banned. She was released in 2004 after serving 10 years in prison. On April 10 she was sentenced again to two years in prison for violating antiterrorism laws for "speaking respectfully

of PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan," the Voice of America reported.

In their current operations against Kurds in southern and eastern Turkey, the Turkish military is aided by a force of 55,000 "village guards." This mainly Kurdish paramilitary force was set up by the Turkish government. Any village that does not provide forces to the system faces reprisals by the military, in some cases destruction and forcible evacuation.



Saygin Serdaroglu/AFP/Getty Images

Displaying Kurdish national colors some 300,000 Kurds took to the streets in Istanbul, Turkey, to celebrate Kurdish new year March 23.

# THE MILITANT

## Workers confront economic crisis

Protests and strikes by workers and farmers against rising costs of food and fuel are spreading. The 'Militant' brings you regular coverage of these struggles. Don't miss a single issue.



Protest against soaring inflation and rising prices in Mogadishu April 10.

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CLIP AND MAIL TO THE MILITANT,  
306 W. 37TH ST., 10TH FLOOR NEW YORK, NY 10018.

## The Militant

Vol. 72/No. 17

Closing news date: April 16, 2008

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Published weekly except for one week in January, two weeks in July, and one week in August.

The *Militant* (ISSN 0026-3885), 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018. Telephone: (212) 244-4899

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Website: [www.themilitant.com](http://www.themilitant.com)

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to the *Militant*, 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the *Militant*, 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

**SUBSCRIPTIONS: United States:** for one-year send \$35 to above address.

**Latin America, Caribbean:** for one-year subscription send \$65, drawn on a U.S.

bank, to above address.

**Africa, Asia, and the Middle East:** Send \$65 drawn on a U.S. bank to above address.

**Canada:** Send Canadian \$45 for one-year subscription to the *Militant*, 2238 Dundas St. West, Suite 201, Toronto, ON. Postal Code: M6R 3A9.

**United Kingdom:** £25 for one year by check or international money order made out to CL London, First Floor, 120 Bethnal Green (Entrance in Brick Lane), London, E2 6DG, England.

**Republic of Ireland and Continental Europe:** £50 for one year by check or international money order made out to CL London at above address.

**France:** Send 76 euros for one-year subscription to Diffusion du *Militant*, P.O. Box 175, 23 rue Lecourbe, 75015 Paris.

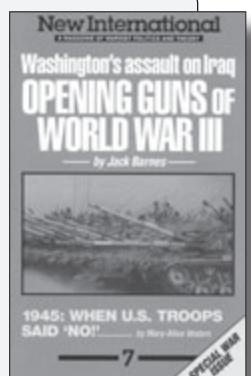
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## For Further Reading

### Washington's assault on Iraq: OPENING GUNS OF WORLD WAR III

by Jack Barnes

"The consequences of the Gulf war have now posed Kurdish national self-determination more sharply than at any time since the close of World War II and the years just after the 1958 revolution that overthrew the monarchy in Iraq."

From *New International* no. 7 —\$14

[WWW.PATHFINDERPRESS.COM](http://WWW.PATHFINDERPRESS.COM)

# U.S. Congress debates Colombia trade pact

BY OLYMPIA NEWTON

A Bush administration proposal for swift approval of a trade deal with Colombia was stalled by congressional Democrats April 10. Debate over the pact became a centerpiece of the presidential elections as an April 22 Democratic Party primary looms in Pennsylvania.

The agreement, which will now be considered after the elections, would open Colombia up to greater penetration by U.S. agricultural, manufacturing, and service companies. Washington would make permanent tariff cuts for textiles, clothing, flowers, and other Colombian products. Bogotá agreed to provisions on labor rights and the environment in an effort to win rapid approval.

Republican presidential candidate John McCain issued a statement condemning the postponement. "It is critical that the United States meet its obligations and support an important ally in the battle against international narcotics and a bulwark of democracy in Latin America," he said.

The Colombian government, headed by president Alvaro Uribe, is one of Washington's closest allies in Latin America. The U.S. has given billions of dollars in military aid to Colombia since 2001, in part as a foothold in Latin America against neighboring Venezuela, where popular mobilizations have increasingly encroached on the privileges of U.S. and domestic capital over the last decade.

In their opposition to the deal, leading Democrats have hypocritically seized on the Uribe administration's record of political repression, especially against trade unionists, and the fact that rightist paramilitaries terrorize and assassinate government opponents with impunity.

"The Colombia free trade deal, in my

view, is not appropriate because of the history of suppression and targeted killings of labor organizers in Colombia," presidential contender Hillary Clinton told CNN. She spoke against the proposed pact even though several prominent figures in her team, including her husband, former president William Clinton, have backed the deal. Clinton fired her chief strategist Mark Penn after the *Wall Street Journal* reported that he held a private meeting with Colombia's ambassador on behalf of his lobbying firm, which Bogotá had hired to promote the trade deal.

Clinton and her rival Barack Obama also present the false argument that trade deals with semicolonial countries act as an impetus for U.S. bosses to ship operations overseas. This nationalist rhetoric hit its height in Pennsylvania, as both Democratic candidates vied for endorsements from the trade union officialdom, who often espouse such views.

"In York, Pennsylvania, Peppermint Patties is closing. Six hundred union jobs will go to Mexico [where] they won't pay health care," said Teamsters general president James Hoffa at a Barack Obama campaign rally in Scranton,



USAF/Staff Sgt. D. Myles Cullen

U.S. Marine General Peter Pace, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, receives Colombia's highest military award, Sept. 13, 2007. Bogotá has received billions in military aid from Washington since 2001, but Congress recently stalled a proposed trade deal between the two.

Pennsylvania. "They won't pay unemployment, it's about money. And these CEOs don't care about America."

Obama has argued against the adoption of the trade deal "because when organizing workers puts an organizer's life at risk, as it does in Colombia, it makes a mockery of our labor protections."

"How are U.S. capitalist politicians qualified to impose labor restrictions on other countries, when they have been at the helm of attacks against unions and workers' rights in this country?" said Róger Calero, Socialist Workers Party

candidate for U.S. president, in an April 14 interview. Calero pointed out that labor and environmental "protections" imposed as part of such trade deals often have devastating consequences for working people in the semicolonial world, while providing a profit boon for the imperialist powers.

"As president, I would cancel the third world debt," he said. "All tariffs should be lifted from Colombian imports. I support Colombia's right to invoke greater protections to block the free reign of U.S. businesses operating on its soil."

## Strikes, demonstrations demand relief

Continued from front page

over 2 years.

"It would be an enormous mistake to imitate Germany," European Central Bank President Jean-Claude Trichet said following the bankers' meeting in Ljubljana.

"We condemn the threats of the politicians, ministers, and employers that the wage rise would cause further inflation, while they keep the real reasons to themselves," said the president of the Association of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia, Dusan Semonic.

Three days after the Ljubljana demonstration, workers in Burkina Faso began a two-day general strike to demand a 25 percent pay raise for public-sector workers and a lowering of food and fuel taxes. Most everything shut down in Ouagadougou, the capital, and Bobo-Dioulasso, the country's second-largest city, a UN news agency reported.

The government of Burkina Faso had previously suspended taxes on basic staples and increased subsidies for water and electricity in response to the crisis. The country's finance minister said the government would not raise wages because it would fuel inflation. Prime Minister Tertius Zongo said, "The people can march and march but nothing will change." The unions responded in a joint declaration: "We will march, march until the situation does change."

Many workers heeded a call for a general strike in Egypt where average household expenses rose 50 percent in the last four months. Cairo's normally traffic-jammed streets were relatively quiet, reported al-Ahram online.

Some 23,000 workers at Egypt Spinning and Weaving Company in Mahala al-Kubra had threatened to strike April 6 unless the company met their demands for higher wages and improved conditions. The company gave in April 5, but the planned action had already grown to a nationwide general strike through word of mouth, phone text messages,

and the Internet. Demands included relief from high prices, housing aid, and an end to police torture.

Thousands displayed their anger that day in Mahala al-Kubra as government buildings and rail lines were damaged and two schools were burned. Police shot people with rubber bullets and tear gas. The protests spread to nearby villages the following day where police killed a 15-year-old boy and injured 111.

More than 20,000 workers at a Nike factory in Vietnam ended a two-day strike April 1 after the company agreed to a 10 percent pay raise. Averages consumer prices there have increased by nearly 20 percent in the last year.

The government in Cameroon raised public-sector wages by 15 percent and canceled taxes on basic foods in March after mass protest actions there in which police killed more than 100 and arrested more than 1,600. The governments of Niger, Ivory Coast, and Indonesia also recently suspended food taxes in response to protests in those countries.

About 10,000 textile workers near Dhaka, Bangladesh, battled police April 12, demanding pay raises to keep up with rising food prices. Recent protests against rising prices were reported in other countries including Cambodia, Somalia, Philippines, and Senegal.

## Haitian workers, peasants protest high cost of food

BY DEBORAH LIATOS

MIAMI—Thousands of workers and peasants took to the streets in the southern Haitian town of Le Cayes April 3 to protest sharp increases in food prices.

On April 8 Haitians stormed the presidential palace in Port-au-Prince and overwhelmed the guards until UN troops fired rubber bullets and tear gas into the crowd. Protesters also demanded that the 9,000-strong UN "peace-keeping" force there leave the country. In Le Cayes, where five protesters were killed, demonstrators attempted to burn down the UN compound, the *Miami Herald* said.

The cost of staples such as rice, beans, fruit, and condensed milk have gone up 50 percent in the past year; the cost of pasta has doubled. There were over 400 demonstrations against the rising cost of living in Haiti between February 2007 and January 2008, according to the United Nations.

Haiti is the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere. Nearly 80 percent of the country's 8.4 million people live on

less than \$2 a day.

The World Food Program has collected less than 15 percent of the US \$96 million it says Haiti needs in donations this year. At the same time, the United Nations spends more than \$500 million a year to maintain its military presence.

In the north of the country, tons of imported food has been held up in customs and left to rot in Haitian ports, the *Miami Herald* reported. Much of Haiti's food must be imported today due to its underdevelopment as a result of centuries of foreign domination.

Haitian President René Préval told the protesters, "I order you to stop. To the people of Haiti who are demonstrating, who are suffering, I ask you to go home." Préval has announced the government will cut some food taxes and lower the price of rice in an attempt to lessen the crisis.

Heightened tensions surfaced within Haiti's ruling class amid the crisis when prime minister Jacques Alexis was booted out of office April 12 on a no-confidence vote by 16 of Haiti's 27 senators.

## CALENDAR

Panel Discussion on  
**OUR HISTORY IS STILL BEING WRITTEN**  
The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution

IOWA

Ames

Thursday, April 24. Time: Reception: 6 p.m. Program: 6:30 p.m. Place: Gallery Memorial Union, Iowa State University. Speakers: Isela Guzmán, activities chair of Latinoamericanos; Christopher Hudson, president of Minorities in Agriculture (MANRRS); Mack Shelley, professor of political science and statistics; Aaron Bleich, Socialist Club; Juan Luis Vivero, auditor of Latinoamericanos; Keith King, public relations chair of MANRRS; Mary-Alice Waters, editor of the book. *For more information:* Tel: (787) 243-9127 or [isela13@iastate.edu](mailto:isela13@iastate.edu).

## MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

FLORIDA

Miami

**The Class Struggle in Venezuela Today**  
Speaker: Omari Musa. Fri., April 25. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. Suggested donation: \$5 dinner, \$5 program. 8365 NE 2nd Ave., suite 206. Tel: (305) 756-4436.

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**U.S. Out of Iraq and Afghanistan Now!**  
Fri., April 25. Dinner, 7 p.m.; program, 8 p.m. Suggested donation: \$5 dinner, \$5 program. 307 W 36th St., 10th fl. Tel: (212) 629-6649.

# Socialist campaigns in Iowa

Continued from front page

farmers independent of the capitalist parties to fight for a massive public works program to create jobs at union scale, for cost-of-living allowances in wages and benefits so workers can keep up with inflation, for the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan and Iraq."

Four students stayed after the class to talk more with Calero, Thon, originally from Sudan, said, "I talked to Barack Obama when he spoke in Iowa earlier this year and now I have heard you." He offered to organize a house meeting for the socialists.

This was one of three college classes Calero addressed while on tour here April 8-11. More than 90 students heard the socialist candidate speak, including members of a high school antiwar group in Des Moines. Calero also met with meatpacking workers at the Tyson plant in Perry, Iowa. Calero had worked at the plant in 2000.

Calero spoke at Grinnell College to a class on "Race and Ethnicity in America" at the invitation of Professor Kesho Scott. "I liked what you said about unifying with immigrant workers," a student told him after his talk. "I had never thought about how they use immigrants to lower everyone's wages."

At Iowa State University in Ames, Professor Mack Shelley introduced Calero to his class on "American Institutions: The Presidency and Congress." The first question asked was, "You were born in Nicaragua. Doesn't that disqualify you from taking office?"

"Laws can be changed," answered Calero. "It takes a struggle, like the fight that won women's right to vote, and the battle in the South to end the poll tax used to disenfranchise

Blacks."

"My running mate Alyson Kennedy and I are the most qualified candidates in this race," he went on. "Our most important qualification for office is that we are workers who have joined in fights with other working people many times through the years to advance the interests of the working class."

Following the class, Calero met with students from the Iowa State Socialist Club. One member, Aaron Bleich from northern Iowa, volunteered to help organize petitioning to get the socialist ticket on the ballot in his home area over the summer.

A reporter from the *Iowa State Daily* interviewed Calero and a front-page article appeared on April 9.



Militant/Frank Forrestal  
Calero (center) talks with workers outside Tyson Foods plant in Perry, Iowa, April 11.

## Calero speaks in Philadelphia on war, energy

BY JANET POST

PHILADELPHIA—Socialist Workers presidential candidate Róger Calero spoke to 35 students at Temple University March 31 at a meeting organized by the Student Peace Alliance (SPA). The event was part of a Pennsylvania tour that included participation in actions by independent truckers against skyrocketing fuel costs and a rally by university workers to win a new contract.

"We believe that every person has a right to present their political views," said SPA president Aram Dagavarian, introducing Calero.

A question-and-answer period followed remarks by the candidate. A member of the SPA asked about the war in Iraq. Calero said that between the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan there are close to 200,000 imperialist troops deployed in the region.

"These are the longest U.S. wars

abroad except for the Vietnam War," he said. "The U.S. military has now been in Iraq for five years, and in Afghanistan for six-and-a-half years. The Democratic and Republican parties have jointly backed these wars from the start. We need a different kind of party, one that acts in the interests of working people. A labor party, based on the trade unions, would lead the fight for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of U.S. troops from all the places they're stationed throughout the world."

A member of Students for Environmental Action asked about carbon credits, "green" industries, and moving away from the use of oil.

"The problem is not oil, but who con-

trols it," said Calero. "The capitalists will turn anything, including so-called green industries, into a way to make money, rather than a way to meet human needs. We must nationalize the energy industry and put it under workers' control."

Some students stayed more than an hour after the meeting for informal discussion with the candidate. Madison Chibirka questioned whether socialists should run for office since she had heard that "socialism would come from the bottom up."

Calero said it's important for socialists to use the platform of the elections as a vehicle to reach more working people and pointed to the example of the Bolshevik Party's election campaigns.

## 'Militant' needs contributions

Continued from front page

April 30, to ensure that bundles of it arrive the morning of May 1, when supporters will be gathering to distribute it at the many marches and rallies planned to support the fight for legalization of undocumented workers. Mailing the paper out for early arrival that day will greatly increase our shipping costs.

The *Militant* has also just spent \$1,400 to send staff member Martín Koppel to Mexico to cover a series of public meetings on books about the Cuban Revolution that featured Armando Hart, a veteran leader of that revolution, as the main speaker.

We don't want lack of money to prevent us from sending correspondents out to cover stories, or keep us from rapidly shipping the paper where it's needed and when it's needed. But that depends on receiving a steady stream of contributions on a weekly basis. It requires supporters in local areas contacting donors each week to make a payment.

We are also still short about \$2,700 in pledges needed to reach our goal of \$100,000. Los Angeles supporters raised their goal by \$500 this week. More areas need to make a similar effort.

Leaders of the Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialists are speaking at meetings to celebrate the *Militant* in coming weeks. They will share the platform with subscribers who are active in building the May Day demonstrations, involved in

truckers' protests against high fuel prices, or part of struggles on the job over speedup, safety, and low wages.

Please send in brief reports and photos from these celebrations so we can report them.

### \$100,000 'Militant' Fund Drive

March 22–May 18 ♦ Week 3 of 8

Country	Quota	Paid	%
FRANCE	260	180	69%
CANADA	4,500	2,350	52%
AUSTRALIA	2,000	790	40%
NEW ZEALAND	3,200	825	26%
SWEDEN	1,000	246	25%
UNITED STATES			
Seattle	7,000	3,025	43%
New York	15,000	4,862	32%
Los Angeles*	9,000	2,568	29%
Twin Cities*	5,200	1,475	28%
Newark, NJ	3,700	987	27%
Miami	3,000	775	26%
San Francisco	12,000	2,925	24%
Des Moines, IA	2,000	372	19%
Boston	2,800	475	17%
Washington, D.C.*	4,300	615	14%
Carrollton, GA	4,700	615	13%
Chicago	7,000	620	9%
Houston	2,500	150	6%
Doraville, GA	4,000	100	3%
Philadelphia	2,500	0	0%
Other		250	
U.S. total	84,700	19,814	23%
UNITED KINGDOM			
Edinburgh	600	0	0%
London	1,000	0	0%
UK total	1,600	0	0%
Int'l total	97,260	24,205	25%
Goal/Should be	100,000	37,500	38%

\* raised quota

## May Day campaign week

Spring 'Militant' Subscription Drive  
March 22–May 18 ♦ Week 3 of 8

Country	Quota	Sold	%
NEW ZEALAND	65	29	45%
AUSTRALIA	55	21	38%
SWEDEN	25	9	36%
UNITED STATES			
Newark, NJ*	160	79	49%
Twin Cities	150	63	42%
San Francisco	125	51	41%
Des Moines, IA	140	51	36%
New York	315	109	35%
Doraville, GA	130	41	32%
Houston	90	28	31%
Washington, D.C.	140	42	30%
Carrollton, GA	145	42	29%
Chicago	120	34	28%
Philadelphia	85	22	26%
Miami	130	33	25%
Boston	60	15	25%
Los Angeles	110	23	21%
Albuquerque, NM	10	2	20%
Seattle	115	22	19%
Other		9	
U.S. total	2,025	666	33%
UNITED KINGDOM			
London	75	25	33%
Edinburgh	45	11	24%
UK total	120	36	30%
CANADA	105	19	18%
Int'l total	2,395	780	33%
Goals/Should be	2,400	900	38%

\* raised goal

Continued from front page pamphlet *Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?* will be available for just \$1 with a *Militant* subscription. The offer runs from April 28 to May 5, for a solid week of campaigning before and after the May Day mobilizations.

The cover of the pamphlet in English and Spanish features an attractive photo of one of the big May Day demonstrations. The pamphlet is centered on the remarks by Socialist Workers Party National Committee member Mary-Alice Waters at a debate at the Venezuela International Book Fair last November. It explains how revolutions come about and why a revolution in the United States is possible and inevitable. It is a great complement to the working-class mobilizations that will take place on May Day, but it will also be of interest to truckers who are planning further protests around fuel prices the same week, and all working people.

To get involved in the subscription effort and the May Day week of campaigning, contact local distributors listed on page 8.

# ON THE PICKET LINE

## Minneapolis picketers protest 'no-match' firings

MINNEAPOLIS—More than 30 people picketed the D'Amico & Sons eatery here April 1, including workers the company had fired the day before. D'Amico & Sons fired 15 Hispanic employees who had worked between 10 and 15 years with the company.

The company fired them after receiving "no-match" letters from the government claiming there were problems with the workers' Social Security numbers.

Angel Casique, with 13 years at D'Amico & Sons, explained that the company "has discriminated a lot against the Latino workers." Casique explained that the company has already hired new workers at much lower pay and benefits. Workers say the company offered a \$500 severance pay to those fired.

"We want justice for all those who have the same problems," said Angel Peñafiel, with 15 years at D'Amico & Sons. "When there is a union there is a lot of strength. If all the Latinos unite, we can achieve something."

Three trucks making deliveries to the company turned away because of the picket line.

Later that day several of the fired workers went to a membership meeting of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 789. The UFCW members, who work at Dakota Premium Foods, were discussing their contract negotiations with the company, but took time out to hear the D'Amico workers and offer their solidarity. The D'Amico



New York construction workers with giant inflatable rat protest April 10 against bosses hiring laborers at lower wages with fewer benefits.

workers extended their solidarity to Local 789's fight for a decent contract.

Fired D'Amico workers also went to the May Day Coalition meeting later that night to get support. The coalition is organizing a march May 1 in support of immigrant rights.

—Rollande Girard

## 200 construction workers rally for union in New York City

NEW YORK—Chanting "we are union!" some 200 members of Bricklayers & Allied Craftworkers Local 1 rallied in front of the Empire State Building April 10 to protest the use

of lower-paid contract laborers to renovate the building. The contractor, M.D.B. Development, "doesn't pay the area-standard wages and benefits and doesn't participate in a state certified apprenticeship training program for masonry restoration," stated a flyer distributed by Local 1.

"We must get the company to sign up with the union," said Eli Franco, a member of Local 1, at the rally.

M.D.B. Development has hired workers through the United Service Workers of America (USWA) Local 339. This outfit has a reputation in the city's labor movement for stepping into the middle of contract disputes to offer workers at lower wages and fewer benefits. The New York AFL-CIO has adopted a resolution denouncing USWA for "its efforts to blatantly undermine organizing activities." The construction industry bosses' organization, the Association of Building Trades Contractors, has praised the USWA as "a strong and viable" alternative to the Laborers union.

—Brian Williams

## Georgia grand jury report on cop killings draws outrage

BY LISA POTASH

DORAVILLE, Georgia—A special grand jury issued a report March 27 on 12 killings by DeKalb County police in 2006. The next morning the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* ran a lead article with the headline, "DeKalb police exonerated in 11 of 12 killings." Below was a photograph of African American relatives of one of the cops' victims, outraged by the grand jury's decision.

The grand jury reported that in one case it studied, the former director of the DeKalb medical examiner's office, Dewey Brown, was seen walking alone down a trail in the area where cops shot 21-year-old Lorenzo Matthews. Later a knife was found, raising suspicion that it was planted by Brown to help the police. Matthews' death was the one killing ruled unjustified by the grand jury.

The grand jury also reported that some of Brown's subordinates testified he said in a staff meeting that he ordered the body of Shakir Harris moved "because I wanted to destroy trace evidence to help the officer." Other subordinates denied he made the statement.

Fatal shootings by county and city cops in the Atlanta metropolitan area over the last several years have sparked many protests. In November 2006, Atlanta police used a fraudulently obtained warrant and fatally shot 92-year-old Kathryn Johnston in her home. Two weeks later, 400 people attended a town hall meeting called by the Atlanta

NAACP.

In April 2007, 26-year-old Ron Pettaway was killed by Fulton County police in the Atlanta suburb of College Park. Five hundred people showed up for Pettaway's funeral, 200 of them marching in the funeral procession.

In Gwinnett County there have been protests in the last two years against several deaths from police use of Tasers. The DeKalb grand jury report recommended Tasers be issued to each police officer, arguing their use would save lives.

League (CL) headquarters in Montreal.

In welcoming remarks Michel Prairie, the organizer of the CL in Montreal, explained that in February the organization moved its headquarters from Toronto to Montreal because of openings here to build and recruit to the communist movement. "In part this greater opening in Quebec is a product of the national and social struggles that took place here over several decades," Prairie said.

Prairie pointed to the recently concluded student strike at the University of Quebec at Montreal and the lockout of workers at Petro-Canada. The workers have maintained around-the-clock picket lines since their fight began in mid-November. Workers at both the Cintas laundry and the Tommy Hilfiger distribution center in the Montreal area succeeded in recent months in organizing into UNITE HERE and are currently fighting for their first contracts.

CL leader Joe Young, a volunteer at the Pathfinder Press booth at the 2008 Havana Book Fair, gave the main pre-

sentation. Young said more than 250 copies of the new edition of *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* were sold at the fair. Pathfinder volunteers are currently translating the new edition into French.

In response to a fund appeal by Michel Prairie, forum participants pledged \$1,700 to the *Militant* fund drive.

## Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay

by Leon Trotsky

Food for thought—and action—from leaders of three generations of the modern revolutionary workers movement.

Features "Trade Unions: Their Past, Present, and Future" by Karl Marx.

—\$15.00

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## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

### THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

### THE MILITANT

PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

NEW YORK, N.Y.

FIVE (5) CENTS

April 29, 1983

SEASIDE, California—Enraged by a proposal to make St. George's, Grenada, a sister city of Seaside, a handful of right-wing members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion attended the April 7 Seaside City Council meeting.

Grenada, a small Caribbean island of 110,000 mostly English-speaking Blacks, overthrew a U.S.-British-backed dictatorship in March 1979.

Speaking at the city council meeting for American Legion Post 591, Roy Daniels bellowed, "The American Legion has formed a task force to ensure that Americanism is not being abrogated."

City Council member Mel Mason initiated the sister-city proposal. He is a leader of the Socialist Workers Party.

April 28, 1958

The brink-of-war policy of the U.S. State Department is no mere diplomatic exercise.

On an unspecified number of occasions, sections of the 3,000-plane Strategic Air Command have been sped into the air for the launching of World War III. So far, they have turned back on learning in time that radar images of "attacking" Soviet planes were caused by meteorites or other natural disturbances.

[Secretary of State] Dulles testified that the "only serious danger" of a Soviet attack lies in the chance that it might misunderstand U.S. intentions. Could there be any greater basis for such a "misunderstanding" than H-bomb-laden jets approaching Soviet borders?

### THE MILITANT

Weekly Organ of the Communist League of America [Opposition]

April 29, 1933

The working class faces May Day this year in the midst of a wave of international reaction. With bestial brutality bloody Fascism has smashed the proudest, the best organized, the traditionally strongest working class of capitalist Europe—the German proletariat.

Austria, a small country but a tremendous citadel of working-class power, stands next in order.

On May 1st the whole world must know that every section, tendency and shade of the revolutionary and labor movement can stand together. In the U.S. the great battle for the release of Tom Mooney and freedom for the Scottsboro boys will be given a tremendous impetus when the proletariat fills streets in its serried ranks on May 1st.

# Revolutionary struggle in the United States: possible and inevitable

**Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?** by Mary-Alice Waters. Pathfinder Press, 2008, \$5.

BY SAM MANUEL

"Is socialist revolution in the U.S. possible?" That question is answered "yes!" without hesitation in this new pamphlet

## IN REVIEW

by Pathfinder Press. Its feature article is the opening presentation by Mary-Alice Waters at a five-day rolling forum at the 2007 Venezuela International Book Fair held in Caracas last November. Waters is a member of the Socialist Workers Party National Committee and president of Pathfinder.

The pamphlet, which takes the question as its title, also includes two articles by *Militant* editor Olympia Newton, who reported on the forum's rich debate and the sometimes sharply counterposed views of the panelists. An introduction by Norton Sandler, a longtime leader of the SWP's trade union work, summarizes the main political issues addressed.

Twelve pages of photos help to illustrate the pamphlet's main points, from the impact of the deepening financial crisis on toilers worldwide, to the growing resistance by working people in mines and mills, the spreading imperialist wars, and the revolutionary legacy of the U.S. working class, from the Civil War to labor battles today.

English and Spanish editions of the pamphlet will be available April 26 for the week leading up to marches and rallies for immigrant rights marking this year's May Day. That "historic working-class holiday is fighting to be reborn in the United States as a day of struggle," Waters says in her opening remarks at the Caracas forum. Over the past two years, millions of workers, led by immigrants, have taken to the streets across the United States to demand: "Stop the Raids! Legalization Now!"

"A fighting vanguard of the working class has emerged in action," Waters ex-

plains. It is a working-class vanguard, not just a vanguard of immigrants.

"[T]he battle to win the vast majority of the working class and the entire labor movement to support the legalization of undocumented immigrants is the single most important 'domestic' political question in the United States," she continues, "and the largest current battle on the road to independent working-class political action, to a labor party based on a militant, fighting union movement."

Workers, farmers, independent truckers, and other working people being squeezed by the economic crisis will read this pamphlet with great interest. Far from the conditions of relative prosperity in the nearly half-century following World War II, Waters says, "What is coming are years that will bring increasingly conscious and organized resistance by a growing vanguard of working people pushed to the wall by the bosses' drive to cut wages and increase what they call productivity."

The unprecedented scope and internationalization of labor resulting from the current immigration to the United States makes it more difficult for the rulers to divide working people along lines of race and national origin, as was done earlier in history, the pamphlet explains.

"We learn from the tradition of struggle coming together from all parts of the world," Waters emphasizes. "As we fight shoulder to shoulder, it becomes harder for the bosses to pit 'us' against 'them.' It becomes more possible to see that our class interests are not the same as those of 'our' bosses, 'our' government, or 'our' two parties."



Top: Rocky Mountain News; Left: Militant/Ben O'Shaughnessy; Right: Library of Congress  
*Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?* features 12 pages of photos. Top: Workers' families confront immigration agents after raid on meatpacking plant in Greeley, Colorado, December 2006. Left: Tufara Waller, director of cultural program at Highlander Center in Tennessee, takes part in "United States: A possible revolution" debate at Venezuela International Book Fair in November 2008. Seated left to right are Eva Golinger, author and lawyer; moderator Luis Bilbao; and Mary-Alice Waters, member of Socialist Workers Party National Committee. Right: Black troops, most of them freed slaves, during U.S. Civil War, the second American revolution.

The pamphlet is noteworthy for taking head-on the dangers of Jew-baiting and agent-baiting within the workers movement. The toxins of Jew-hatred, a means by which the rulers historically have tried to deflect responsibility for the capitalist crisis, and of agent-baiting were introduced into the forum discussion and effectively answered by Waters and others.

Waters also explains that one enormous obstacle to a revolutionary course, represented by a powerful bureaucratic social caste in the Soviet Union camouflaging itself as communist, no longer exists. As class battles deepen today, workers will seek out previous histori-

cal experiences like the Bolshevik-led Russian Revolution and the Communist International under Lenin.

"Yes, revolution is possible in the United States," Waters concludes. "Socialist revolution. To put it in class terms, a proletarian revolution—the broadest, most inclusive social upheaval of the oppressed and exploited imaginable, and the reorganization of society in their interests. . . .

"What is not inevitable, however, is the outcome of these coming revolutionary struggles. That is where political clarity, organization, discipline, and the caliber of proletarian leadership become decisive."

## New Jersey event discusses Chinese in Cuba

Continued from front page

Cuban Revolution today.

Among those sponsoring the program were the Asian Studies Program, the Center for Latino Arts and Culture, and the Department of Latino and Hispanic Caribbean Studies, in addition to seven student groups including the Chinese Student Organization; Lambda Theta Alpha, Epsilon Chapter; and the Rutgers

Union of Cuban American Students.

The panel featured Matsuda; Leo Ng, vice president of the Chinese Student Organization; Aldo Lauria Santiago, chair of the department of Latino and Hispanic Caribbean Studies, who spoke as well as moderated the event; and Mary-Alice Waters, editor of the book and president of Pathfinder Press. Monique Hernandez, of the Rutgers Union of Cuban American Students, welcomed people to the program.

"This is a book about ordinary people," Matsuda said, "and why and how they became part of a revolution and change." Matsuda said his favorite part of the book was when Choy described how his father, a merchant, made him work in the family store during the day and study accounting at night, while what he really wanted to study was history. "What Choy showed is that while you may not get to study history, you can be part of making it," said Matsuda.

Ng said that one of the things that impressed him most about the book was learning how the Cuban Revolution "cut across and overcame animosities between people of different cultures." Ng said *Our History Is Still Being Written* helped him to see that "if a country as small as Cuba can make a revolution, against what seem to be impossible odds," then change is possible in the United States and the rest of the world.

"This is a work of recovery," said Lauria. "This book discovers voices that would otherwise be missing." Lauria noted that he knew very little about the subject of the Chinese in Cuba.

*Our History Is Still Being Written* is a book that "highlights the question of leadership; focusing on leaders that came from within the working class and different racial groups, names we may not know, and who are still active today," said Lauria. He encouraged those present to read this book and others put out by Pathfinder.

Waters said the book tells the story of the Cuban Revolution in the words of those who lived and made it.

"The Cuban Revolution was not an isolated event," she said, "It was part of a great wave of national liberation struggles that swept the globe during and after World War II."

"This book is one of the best introductions to the Cuban Revolution," she explained. "But it is not just about Cuba. It's about us here in the United States today. It helps us recover our history of struggle, too."

"There is a long history of revolutionary struggle in this country, from fighting against Jim Crow to the struggles to overturn the exclusion laws against the Chinese and other immigrants," Waters said. "Through these struggles you un-

Continued on page 7

**New! Available April 26!**

### Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?

by Mary-Alice Waters

"Not only is socialist revolution possible; revolutionary struggle is inevitable. It will be initiated at first not by the toilers, but forced upon us by the crisis-driven assaults of the propertied classes. . . .

"What is not inevitable, however, is the outcome of these coming revolutionary struggles. That is where political clarity, organization, discipline, and the caliber of proletarian leadership become decisive."



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# Detroit auto workers solid in strike over wage cuts

BY BETSY FARLEY

DETROIT—Workers at American Axle & Manufacturing continue to walk the picket line in a strike that began February 26 against company plans to cut wages in half, from around \$27 to \$14.50 per hour. The strike involves 3,650 workers at four plants in Michigan and New York State who are members of the United Auto Workers union (UAW).

American Axle supplies parts to General Motors facilities across the country. GM has reduced or halted production at 30 of its plants so far because of the strike, laying off nearly 40,000 workers.

General Motors reported an 18.7 percent decrease in sales of light vehicles in March. Coming at a time when auto sales overall are slow due to the economic crisis, workers on the picket line at the Detroit plant said they know it will take some time before their strike impacts the auto maker. "If it takes 100

days we'll be out here for 101," said Dave Johnson, a machine repairman with 14 years in the plant.

Juanita Jennings, a brake assembler with eight years, explained the company also wants to replace pensions for retirees with a 401K plan. "But pensions should not be optional," she said. "Working-class people in Detroit are supporting us," Jennings continued, pointing to the number of cars passing the picket line honking and waving. "From bus drivers, to nurses, to factory workers, they all know if we go down, they'll be next."

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—In an April 8 report to Congress Gen. David Petraeus, Washington's top general in Iraq, refused to say if there would be further troop reductions in Iraq after



Militant/Betsy Farley

March 30 picket line at American Axle auto parts plant in Detroit, where workers have been on strike since February 26 against company plans to cut wages in half.

## New Jersey event on Cuba



More than 85 people attended a broadly-sponsored meeting on *Our History Is Still Being Written* at the Asian American Cultural Center at Rutgers University New Brunswick. Panelists, from left, Aldo Lauria Santiago, chair of the department of Latino and Hispanic Caribbean Studies; Matt Matsuda, dean of College Avenue campus; Mary-Alice Waters, editor of the book; Leo Ng, vice president of the Chinese Student Organization, and Monique Hernandez of the Rutgers Union of Cuban American Students.

### Continued from page 6

derstand more richly why the questions of immigration and the need to fight for a world without borders can bring millions of workers into the streets today."

"This is why this book has touched a chord," she said. "The breadth of interest in the story told by this book has been unprecedented for Pathfinder and it has a lot to do with what is happening in the United States."

A lively discussion followed the presentations. One student asked if it was really possible to make a revolution in the United States when there is so much interest in material things.

"Revolutionary struggle doesn't start with ideas; it comes about because you

reach a point where there is no recourse and you have to do something to change the conditions you face," said Waters. She pointed to the deepening economic crisis and the beginnings of resistance among workers in this country as signs of the struggles to come.

A student of Cuban descent said his parents had told him that most Chinese Cubans had left Cuba after the revolution.

Waters said that many Chinese Cubans who were wealthy property owners did leave the island after the revolution. "There was a class divide among Chinese Cubans as in other sections of Cuban society," she noted. She also said that part of the reason for the decline of Barrio Chino in Havana was that "after the revolution the Chinese were integrated into all sectors, all levels of society and not isolated in a barrio."

*Our History Is Still Being Written* offers an example for workers and youth who want to fight to change things in the United States, said Waters. "As Choy says, 'A better world is possible, but only with a socialist revolution.'"

### *Our History Is Still Being Written*

The story of three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution by Armando Choy, Gustavo Chui, and Moisés Sio Wong \$20

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about a third of the 30,000 additional "surge forces" are withdrawn over the summer. He also continued Washington's campaign of threats and pressure against Iran, calling that country "the greatest long-term threat to the viability of a democratic Iraq."

Petraeus charged that during recent fighting between Iraqi government troops and Shiite militias in Basra, Iran played a "destructive" role in "funding, training, arming, and directing the so-called 'special groups.'" He added that "The bulk of the weaponry certainly came from Iran."

Iranian government official Akbar Rafsanjani called the accusation against Iran "sheer lies made by Iraq's occupiers to continue Iraq's occupation."

President Bush agreed with Petraeus's accusations in an April 10 speech. "Iraq is the convergence point for two of the greatest threats to America in this new century: al-Qaeda and Iran," he said.

Petraeus appeared before the Senate Armed Services Committee along with U.S. ambassador to Iraq Ryan Crocker. The general said that after the troop reductions there would be a 45-day period of "consolidation and evaluation," after which recommendations might be made on troop levels.

In his speech Bush said considering this evaluation period a "pause" is misleading because no military operations will be on hold. "As we speak," he said, "U.S. special forces are launching multiple operations every night to capture or kill al-Qaeda leaders in Iraq."

Petraeus called progress in stabilizing Iraq "fragile and reversible." Despite a tenuous truce in the port city of Basra, U.S. and Iraqi government forces have kept up an offensive against Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr's militia in Sadr City. U.S. forces killed 13 suspected members of that group during April 11 battles, according to Reuters.

During his testimony Petraeus said the largest part of surge forces would be withdrawn from Anbar province, once a center of Baathist and al-Qaeda militias. He noted that over the last year the Iraqi military has carried out its own surge with an additional 100,000 troops and police. Iraqi security forces now stand at 540,000. Another 91,000, many from former

Sunni-Baathist militias, are part of the "Sons of Iraq" aiding U.S. and Iraqi troops against al-Qaeda.

Arizona senator John McCain, the presumptive Republican nominee for president, said that under Petraeus's leadership substantial progress had been made, in spite of the Bush administration's previous four years of mismanaging the war. He said the performance of Iraqi troops in Basra demonstrated that "we're no longer looking down the abyss of defeat."

Democrats played down U.S. military gains and called the Basra offensive "incompetent." Massachusetts senator Edward Kennedy noted that 1,000 Iraqi troops either deserted or refused to fight in the operation.

"Senator, they are fighting," answered Petraeus, pointing out that Iraqi military casualties have recently been three times that of U.S. troops.

Democrats also argued that the lack of political progress by the Iraqi government overshadowed any military gains. Others argued that the war in Iraq is diverting resources from other fronts in Washington's "global war on terror."

Illinois Senator Barack Obama, the top contender for the Democratic presidential nomination, said the focus on Iraq has left al-Qaeda more secure in Afghanistan. He called for a "diplomatic surge" that would include discussions with the government of Iran.

Obama's main challenger, New York senator Hillary Clinton, agreed, saying an "orderly" withdrawal of troops from Iraq is necessary to rebuild the U.S. military and focus on Afghanistan and "global terrorist groups."

Both Democrats and Republicans in Congress said that with the high cost of gas and rising levels of unemployment in the United States the Iraqi government must bear more of the cost of the war.

But after Bush urged Congress to quickly approve \$108 billion in further war spending April 10, Senate Majority Leader Harold Reid told the press, "We'll do everything we can to fund the troops."

He added, "[T]he president need not lecture us on taking care of the troops. . . . We are taking care of the troops."

# Pragmatism, Marxism, and the U.S. labor movement

*Below is an excerpt from Polemics in Marxist Philosophy. In this collection of essays George Novack explains why the materialist foundations and dialectical methods of Marxism offer the only scientific basis for working-class political action. The chapter "American philosophy and the labor movement" examines the interconnection of the pragmatic world view of liberal intellectuals and the labor officials and their class collaboration in politics. The author of numerous titles on Marxist theory and politics, Novack joined the communist movement in 1933 and remained a member and leader of the Socialist Workers Party until his death in 1992. Copyright ©1993 Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.*



CORBIS

American Federation of Labor President Samuel Gompers (left), with steel magnate Charles Schwab. "Scorn for broad generalizations in historical and social questions was most conspicuous in the Gompers section of the labor movement," writes Novack.

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY GEORGE NOVACK

The narrow outlook of the AFL had much in common with the instrumentalist theories of John Dewey, the highest form of pragmatism. Gompersism and Deweyism were kindred products of the same period in America's social evolution. The principal methods of instrumentalism corresponded on the top level of

theory to the everyday practices and outlook of the craft union officials. To be sure, the two sprang from different social strata and did not march closely together. The one stemmed directly from the needs and views of liberal middle class intellectuals; the other came from the habits and interests of the union bureaucracy and the craft aristocracy. Although the former was more volatile and less hidebound than the latter, they converged in the nationally enclosed, opportunist, piecemeal nature of their common ideology. . . .

The two movements were alike not only in their methods of thought but in their underlying aims. Both sought to effect improvements for the lower classes step by step within the settled framework of capitalist institutions. This program of gradual reform necessarily involved accommodation to the political and social bases of capitalism and a deference to its governing bodies. . . .

The scorn for broad generalizations in historical and social questions was most conspicuous in the Gompers section of the labor movement. But it was an inescapable phenomenon of that entire era. Its prevalence, though in different forms, at the opposite end of the labor movement testified to

its deep roots in the objective conditions of American life. Eugene Debs, the revolutionary socialist who was Gompers's lifelong left-wing opponent, exemplified in his own way the low theoretical level characteristic of that time. Debs made his way from trade unionism to socialism under the blows he received through personal participation in the union organizing campaigns and class battles of the 1890s. He learned the real nature of capitalist chicanery and cruelty not so much from books as in the school of hard knocks. In this respect, as in so many others, Debs was genuinely representative of the native laboring masses.

He became a thoroughgoing socialist and a left-wing one. But, through no fault of his own, he never grew to be a Marxist leader of the highest stature. As a self-educated worker-leader in the provincial America of his day, he could not acquire the theoretical equipment, training, and insight vested in the outstanding figures of the great German and Russian schools of revolutionary socialism who stood at the crossroads of world history in their time. As Debs's best biographer, Ray Ginger, notes: "In his entire life, he never made an important decision on the basis of theoretical study. The

facts of his own life kicked him into every step; often he required more than one kick."

This weakness handicapped Debs at many points in his career: in the internal party controversies of the pre-war socialist movement, at the time of Wilson's intervention into the First World War, and finally in the developments following the Russian revolution, which required a profound theoretical readjustment in the outlook of all socialists. Debs shared this inadequacy with most of his generation, regardless of their special tendency or affiliation. Similar deficiencies in theory and program were stamped upon the militant ranks of migratory labor and the proletarian fighters of the IWW; they were to prove a decisive factor in the disintegration of this movement after the First World War and the Russian revolution.

Engels, who closely followed the main events in the labor movement here during the last part of the nineteenth century, often emphasized these contradictory aspects of the American character: its strength in practical affairs coupled with its feebleness in theory. "Theoretical ignorance is the attribute of all young peoples," he wrote his friend Friedrich Sorge in the United States, "but so is the speed of development in practice. Just as in England, so all abstractions count for nothing in America until they have been brought forward by factual necessity."

Engels expected that the harsh necessities of the class struggle and the resultant schooling of experience would in time stimulate the American workers' vanguard to gain a clearer, more comprehensive insight into their historical destiny and enable them to overcome their traditional empiricism. Since his death in 1895, our labor movement has taken giant strides forward. But it must be said that for all the advances made in its understanding, these have not kept pace with its organizational gains, and even less with its needs. The union movement is still, in Engels's words, "practically ahead of the whole world and theoretically still in its swaddling clothes."

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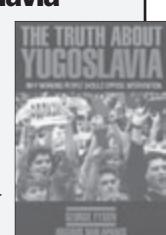
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# Profit system is behind food crisis

Millions of workers around the world are protesting ruinous inflation in the price of food and fuel.

Mouthpieces of big business say the problem is scarcity. We've reached the earthly limits of the capacity of human labor and nature to produce food, they say.

"Everyone wants to eat like an American on this globe. But if they do, we're going to need another two or three globes to grow it all," Daniel W. Basse told the *New York Times*. Basse is president of AgResource Company, a firm that analyzes crop prices for farmers and wealthy speculators on the commodities market.

This is false—and pure imperial arrogance.

"Scarcity has nothing whatsoever to do with why more than a third of humanity has no access to electricity today, or goes to bed without enough food, or has no access to potable water," said Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, in a 2001 talk published under the title "Our Politics Start with the World" in *New International* number 13. "Those are social questions, class questions, political questions: questions of capitalist income distribution and its continual reproduction."

Capitalism has produced tremendous technological advances that have the potential to resolve the food crisis. But, as Karl Marx explained, the capitalist class, in its competition for profits, develops these techniques and social processes of production only by "simultaneously undermining the original sources of all wealth: the soil and the worker."

This takes place in the advanced capitalist countries, where workers are feeling the squeeze of higher prices, as well as in the least developed nations. But the crisis is especially sharp in the semicolonial world.

For more than 100 years the centers of world finance capital—the United States, the Western European powers, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand—have dominated economic life in Latin America, Asia, Africa, and the Pacific.

Their policies guarantee that those nations lag further and further behind in agricultural and industrial production. On average there are 16 tractors per 1,000 acres of land in the imperialist states, compared to 3 tractors per 1,000 acres in the rest of the world.

In sub-Saharan Africa, fertilizer use is less than 10 percent of the world average. Three-fourths of the farmland lacks nutrients needed for crop production.

The workers movement needs to advance a program that addresses this gross inequality.

We should oppose protectionist measures Washington uses to block imports of goods produced in countries oppressed by imperialism. And support efforts by those countries to defend their markets from the predatory trade policies of the imperialists.

We should expose and fight the drive by imperialism to prevent these nations from gaining access to energy sources, including nuclear power.

We should demand cancellation of the onerous and unpayable Third World debt.

## May Day actions for immigrant rights

*The time and location of the marches below are included where the information is available. Please send us information on actions in your area for inclusion in next week's list.*

**ARIZONA**

**Tucson** 8 a.m. assemble at Southgate Shopping Center, march to Armory Park

**CALIFORNIA**

**Los Angeles** 2 p.m. rallies at McArthur Park and at Olympic and Broadway, then march to City Hall

**Oakland** 3 p.m. rally in Fruitvale Plaza, march to City Hall

**San Diego** 2:30 p.m. rally at San Diego City College, march to Pantoja Park

**San Diego** 5:30 p.m. rally at 30th St. and Ocean Blvd.

**San Francisco** 2 p.m. rally in Dolores Park, march to Civic Center for 5 p.m. rally

**San Jose** 4 p.m. rally at corner of King and Story, march to San Jose City Hall

**Santa Rosa** 12:00 noon assemble at Old Albertson's lot, 665 Sebastopol Rd., 1 p.m. march to Julliard Park

**CONNECTICUT**

**New Haven** 12:00 noon to 8 p.m. New Haven Green

**FLORIDA**

**Florida City** (May 3) 2 p.m. Antiguo Flea Market, 450 Davis Parkway

**ILLINOIS**

**Chicago** 10 a.m. assemble at Union Park, march at 12:00 noon

**GEORGIA**

**Atlanta** 4 p.m. rally at state capitol

**Carrollton** 11 a.m. assemble at Carrollton Cultural Arts Center, 12:00 noon march to Court House

**KENTUCKY**

**Louisville** 5 p.m. rally at Gene Snyder Court House, march to Jefferson Park

**MASSACHUSETTS**

**Amherst** 12:00 noon rally at Amherst Common

**Boston** 4:30 p.m. rally on Boston Common

**Chelsea** 2:30 p.m. rally in Glendale Park in Everett, march to Chelsea

**MICHIGAN**

**Detroit** 10 a.m. rally in Patton Park, march to Clark Park

**MINNESOTA**

**St. Paul** 2 p.m. march through St. Paul to state capitol

**NEW JERSEY**

**Dover** 6 p.m. Blackwell St.

**NEW YORK**

**Hempstead** time and location to be announced

**Manhattan** 12:00 noon rally at Union Square, 4 p.m. march

**Rochester** 4:30 p.m. rally at Liberty Pole on East Main and East Ave.

**NORTH CAROLINA**

**Charlotte** 4 p.m. assemble at Central Ave. and the Plaza, 6 p.m. march to Charlotte Mecklenburg Government Center

**Raleigh** 5 p.m. rally at state capitol

**OREGON**

**Portland** time and location to be announced

**TEXAS**

**Austin** 4:30 p.m. assemble at south steps of capitol, 5:30 p.m. march

**Houston** 2 p.m. Mickey Leland Federal Building, 1900 block of Louisiana

**WASHINGTON STATE**

**Bellingham** time and location to be announced

**Seattle** time and location to be announced

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**

12:00 noon pickets at Republican and Democratic National Committee offices, 4 p.m. rally at Malcolm X/Meridian Hill Park

**WISCONSIN**

**Madison** 11:30 a.m. Brittingham Park

**Milwaukee** 10:30 a.m. assemble at South 5th and Washington, march begins 11:30 a.m.

## LETTERS

**Truckers' protest**

I'm writing to let you know that truckers will rally in Washington, D.C., April 28 against high fuel costs. Stand up, speak out, or go broke!

*Daniel*

*By e-mail*

**Obama and race**

In the "As I see it" column in the April 14 *Militant*, you made a number of important observations about Barack Obama's March 18 speech on race relations. You referred to the numerous times he used the words "we" and "American" as a conscious attempt to hide the class

war that U.S. rulers are waging against working people in this country.

But there was one statement in the article that I thought cut across the argument you were making. You said, "U.S. workers have nothing to be proud of in the record of wars waged by Washington around the world, wars that have taken a disproportionate toll on soldiers who are Black."

I understand the point you were trying to make about the fact that due to the racism of the rulers, Blacks pay a bigger price in terms of dead and wounded for the U.S. rulers'

wars today.

But it is the toilers of the world that have paid the most disproportionate share in terms of blood and treasure for U.S. imperialism's wars. This was an important part of the class truth that Obama was trying to hide in his speech.

*Mike Galati*

*New York, NY*

**The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.**

## Paris march demands legalization for immigrants



Militant/Claude Bleton

Demanding legalization and equal rights, several thousand undocumented workers and their supporters demonstrated in Paris and in other French cities April 5. The actions were called by the General Confederation of Labor (CGT), and organizations in favor of immigrant rights. The French government has set a quota of 25,000 undocumented immigrants to be deported annually. The day before the rally a janitor from Mali died after jumping in the Marne river near Paris, trying to escape cops chasing him after an ID check at a train station. It's the third death of an immigrant fleeing cops since last September.

—CLAUDE BLETON

## L.A. May Day

**Continued from front page**

leader of the United Workers of Van Nuys.

The immigration police arrested 138 workers in February in a raid at the Micro Solutions plant in Van Nuys, a district near Los Angeles. These workers have organized demonstrations and fundraising events to fight against the government's effort to deport them. They are planning a big presence at the May 1 march and rally here for immigrant rights.

"They're doing this because we've been making noise and not staying quiet," Ulises said. "They've felt the pressure and are trying to intimidate us, but we're going to continue to march."

The March 25th Coalition and the Multi-ethnic Immigrant Workers Organizing Network are the two main coalitions calling the May Day action here. The action calls for legalization for immigrant workers and an end to raids and deportations. In the past the two coalitions organized separate marches, but organizers say they were spurred to organize a united action this year in face of an increase in raids by the immigration cops and other police measures against immigrant workers.

The Los Angeles activities on May 1 start at 2 p.m., with rallies at MacArthur Park and at Olympic and Broadway, followed by a march to City Hall.

The city council is discussing repealing Order 40, which prohibits the Los Angeles cops from checking immigration status. Council members are using the killing of a Black teenager by a youth who was allegedly undocumented to try to win support for the anti-immigrant measure.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs and Border Patrol are increasing their raids in Los Angeles County.

"These raids have been under the pretext of 'routine inspections' these agencies never did," said Xiomara Corpeño, of the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights in Los Angeles. "And now they go to the warehouses and leave not with materials but workers."

"All immigrants should come out to protest the conditions of work here," said Erendira, a garment worker at the American Apparel plant, when asked about the importance of the May Day march. "People who are not immigrants need to come out against this same system too."